

Need to Know Before You Go

- If you have small children (under than 3 years old), you might want to consider stocking up on winter clothes (i.e. turtle necks, undershirts, thermal underwear, slippers, warm-ups) before you move to Japan. The Navy Exchange does carry these items, but they tend to sell out fast in the winter months. Also, tennis shoes for toddlers, sizes 7 and under are hard to find, especially in half sizes. Collect any mail order catalogs that you might be interested in ordering from, especially if your size is unique (Petite, Big & Tall, etc.) The Fleet & Family Support Center has a catalog kiosk in their reception area to meet your shopping needs but these catalogs are for use only in the FFSC.
- If you are traveling to Japan with your family, be sure to visit the FAST (Family Assistance Support Team) Office. They will provide you with a checklist of things that you need to do in order to complete your Family File. This is in addition to any checklist you may have received from your new command. The purpose of the Family File is to ensure that, in case of emergency while the active duty member is deployed, the spouse will have all of the important documents on hand to do whatever is necessary (i.e. replace ID card, etc.)
- For Accompanied Members, you can ask your sponsor to request a Post Office Box for you prior to your arrival. Just mail, fax or e-mail a copy of your orders and Family Entry Approval letter to your sponsor and he/she can take them to the Post Office and send you your new forwarding address.
- If you are planning on sending your child to day care, you can fill out the application form (DD 2606) and return it to the following address:
MWR Dept
Main Child Development Center
PSC 473 Box 60 Code 608
FPO AP 96349-1105

The waiting list for full-time day care depends on the age group but it can take as long as 9- 12 months so the sooner you put him/her on the waiting list, the better. Be sure that your child's immunizations are up to date.

- While looking for an off-base home, the Housing Welcome Center provides Child Care Vouchers for day care at the Hourly Child Development Center or with a Certified Family Home Care Provider. The Hourly CDC has a limit of 25 hours per week and you have to attend a short orientation to register your child. The Family Home Care program does not have a limit. All childcare facilities require up-to-date immunizations.
- Carry your personal records (medical/dental records, Powers of Attorney, orders, Family Entry Approval, etc.) with you while you are traveling. (Refer to the previous checklist.)
- There are several options for transportation: buy a car, ride the base shuttle or base taxi, local trains, take the Home to Work bus from Ikego or Negishi, and/or take an off-base taxi.
- You can buy Yen (Japanese currency) on base at the Community Bank, located in Bldg. 1555 on the first deck. They have a customer service lobby,

an ATM at the front of the building, one ATM across from the Fleet Recreation Center and another ATM in front of the NEX.

- As with any move, some cash reserves will be needed for housing and transportation when you arrive in Yokosuka. Move-in costs for the Yokosuka off-base area are running the equivalent of four months rent. They are broken down as first month's rent, security deposit, agent's fee and landlord's bonus. The Navy reimburses directly for the agent's fee and landlord's bonus, and you can draw advance pay to cover the first month's rent and security deposit. For some cases, the owner may demand an additional month's rent as a bonus or as an extra security deposit. If justified, the Welcome Center can approve the extra bonus to be reimbursed by the Navy. An extra security deposit is not reimbursable.
- Emergency/Emergency Travel - When a family experiences any sort of a crisis; they should first contact their chain of command. Depending on the nature of the emergency, your LCPO can notify the appropriate divisions and departments to provide assistance. The Family Readiness Group and the Command Ombudsman can also assist if they are notified by the service member or the spouse.
- Although you are stationed overseas, your "FPO AP" address is still considered a U.S. address. Many companies will ship to FPO addresses; you just have to research it. You can still have things you can't live without from the US! A little benefit that many don't know about is the privilege of mailing things for free to other FPO addresses. Inquire at the base or ship's Post Office about "MPS'ing" letters and packages to and from other military bases. This could be useful if you have friends stationed elsewhere or you are planning to travel to distant bases.
- Moving into an off-base house and not used to wood floors? Consider buying lots of felt or cork furniture pads from the "100-yen store" in advance of your furniture delivery and placing them where you want your heavy furniture items to be placed. Also, felt pads on chairs are also a good idea. If the house has a "tatami" room, ask the rental agent for ideas on how to place furniture without damaging the grass mats. If you move into a house before your household goods arrive, there is loaner furniture (beds, sofas, and so on) available for free through the housing office. Smaller items such as linens, dishes, pots and pans can be borrowed from the Community Center for a fee. Both the housing office and the self- help office have items such as refrigerators, microwaves and dehumidifiers that can be borrowed for the duration of your tour. Self-help also has equipment, tools, and some supplies available for maintaining your residence. **VERY IMPORTANT** – if you own BIG furniture such as entertainment center, china cabinet, dining set, king size bed, water bed, drawers, chests, living room set and you are considering in living in off-base housing? You might want to put those in storage. Japanese houses are a lot smaller than American houses. If the movers can't move your furniture in your new Japanese house, they will leave them on your front yard (if you have one) or outside your house.
- About electricity: Electrical power in off-base houses is approximately 30-50 amps at 100 volts/50 cycles. On-base houses are about the same. As the man in the Self-Help Office explained, because Japan's electricity is lower

than American, it is not dangerous to try using your electrical appliances without transformers. If they don't function properly, then use them with transformers which can be borrowed from Self-Help. Off-base, the wall outlets will accommodate American plugs except for 3-prong plugs. It is a good idea to use battery operated alarm clocks.

- Some people use the Internet and a service such as Skype (www.skype.com) to phone the U.S. If you live on-base, you can sign up for a DSN phone plan through the Base Communications Office (Phone: 243-5847). The base Cable Office (Americable) also offers a service like Vonage. ***Please ask your sponsor for other economical phone options for calling the U.S.***
- There are a number of free classes offered through Fleet and Family Support Center- ex. Japanese conversation. The office is located on the second floor of the PSD building. For more information - please call 243-3372. There are also Japanese Language Programs available at the NEX.
- Organic food co-op Seikatsu Club delivers to the areas of Hokkaido to Aichi Prefecture. Hayama office delivers to Yokosuka, Miura, Zushi, Hayama, and Kamakura. They carry many items such as whole milk, meat, tofu, vegetables, and many other products. Refer to the website for more information www.seikatsuclub.coop/english/index/html
Or contact Kim Jordan at jordanbk@mac.com
- You can use a digital video recorder in Japan and one may come in handy if you watch sports. Many U.S. games are on TV during the night if they are live. (*Note that Tivo and ReplayTV devices and services do not work in Japan, even as a manual digital recorder.*) Japanese DVD's are not compatible with American DVD players. Check with the local cable company if you have your digital video tuner will work with their system. If not, you can rent one from them for as low as \$6.00 a month.
- Netflix (mail order video rental) will work here and though mail may take longer, you can still enjoy —home delivery of movies and TV shows on DVD here in Japan. There is a video/DVD rental store on base and the base library also has a collection of downloadable audio books.